

to distinctly claim the subject matter of the present invention. New claims 53-60 are added, the support for which is provided in the pending claims and the specification. No new matter is added. Thus, the new claims and claims as amended do not go beyond the scope of the disclosure in the application as filed.

Claims 1, 22, 45, and 52 are independent claims, with corresponding claims depending therefrom. The pending claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,449,634 ("Capiel"). The Examiner stated that Capiel lacks explicit recitation of all the elements in the claims, but took Official Notice that both the concept and advantages of said undisclosed elements were "well known" and expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention.

The Applicants respectfully traverse the above grounds of rejection for the following reasons, each of which are discussed in further detail below.

(1) In absence of a cited reference for a claimed limitation, rejection based on common knowledge is not persuasive without a supportive affidavit.

(2) The cited reference is unrelated to the claimed subject matter of the present invention and therefore an improper 103(a) reference.

(3) The present invention as claimed is patentably distinct from the cited reference because there is no motivation to modify the reference to perform the claimed process and system of the present invention, where the reference expressly teaches away from the claimed limitations of the present invention.

Foremost, if the Examiner has based his rejection on "common knowledge" or "well known" prior art, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner cite a reference or alternatively provide an affidavit in support of his rejection as required under MPEP §2144.03.¹

¹ "The rationale supporting an obviousness rejection may be based on common knowledge in the art or "well-known" prior art . . . If the applicant traverses such an assertion the examiner should cite a reference in support of his or her position. When a rejection is based on facts within the personal knowledge of the examiner . . . the facts must be supported, when called for by the applicant, by an affidavit from the examiner."

Without such supportive evidence, there is no sufficient basis for establishing a prima facie case of obviousness.²

Providing supportive evidence is particularly important here because in every single page of the 30-page Office Action (and with respect to almost every claim), the Examiner has repeatedly relied on the "common knowledge" argument as the basis of rejection, without once offering any evidence to support this basis. Therefore, compliance with the provisions of MPEP §2144.03 and MPEP §2143 for *each instance* of rejection based on "common knowledge" is requested.

Furthermore, as admitted by the Examiner, the cited prior art reference fails to disclose, teach, or suggest each of the elements recited in claims 1, 22, 45, or 52. MPEP §2143 provides:

"To establish a prima facie case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations."

Considering the nature of the system disclosed in Capiel, it is respectfully submitted that none of the aforementioned three basic criteria are met to establish a prima facie case of obviousness.

The subject matter of the present invention is unrelated, or at best remotely related, to that of the cited reference. Particularly, Capiel is directed to a method and system for remotely determining if a *client computer* has the *software resources* to process certain *file formats* included in an email. In contrast, the present invention is directed to a method of tracking *web pages visited* by an email recipient.

² See also MPEP §2143.

The cited reference provides the means to verify compatibility between email software--executed on a particular client computer--and the file format included in an email.³ As such, Capiel is not concerned with the web surfing activities of an email recipient. The present invention, however, provides the means to monitor web surfing activities of a uniquely identifiable individual (i.e., email recipient), regardless of the file format included in the email.

Despite that both of the above methods use email as a means of communication, the particular results of each method and the particular technical manner in which the results are obtained are patentably distinct. The Examiner alleges that col. 1, lns. 22-24 of the reference provides the requisite motivation for modification of the cited reference to perform the claimed process. The cited section of the reference provides:

"Targeting advertising to customer profiles has been a method to improve E-mail sales. The challenge has been to identify the audience and tailor the advertising to that audience."

The Applicants submit that the above recitation of a general statement, alone, does not provide a convincing reason why the present invention, in particular, is related to that of the cited reference or a motivation to modify the cited reference to perform the claimed process. To illustrate this point by analogy, consider first and second telemarketing calls, where the purpose of the first call is to determine if a person drives a certain automobile, and the purpose of the second call is to determine which cities the person has visited.

Even though the means of communication (i.e., telephone) for making the first and second calls is the same, it does not follow that the two telemarketing methods provided above are related or obvious over one another. For the same reason, just because the present invention and that of the cited reference utilize email as a means of communication, it does not necessarily follow that the two are related or that one can be modified to match the other. As such, the cited section by the Examiner is inadequate to provide a reason why teachings in the cited reference are relevant to the rejection of the pending claims.

³ See Capiel, col. 1, lns. 35-41.

Additionally, it is well settled that the mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination or modification.⁴ There is no suggestion or motivation in the reference for the modifications proposed by the Examiner. The Applicants have reviewed the cited prior art and submit that no portion of the cited reference discloses, teaches, or suggests how or why the system of Capiel is modifiable to track web pages or web sites visited by an email recipient.

The Examiner stated on page 5 of the Office Action, first full paragraph:

"Capiel (col. 1, ll. 55-60) shows elements that suggest "tracking the email recipient's movement within the one or more web sites by associating the unique identifier with information that defines consumer activity within said one or more web sites."

Capiel at col. 1, ll. 55-60 provides:

"[T]hose E-mail clients that can display images can receive compatible visual image advertisements and those that cannot receive text. The invention in addition tracks the responses of the E-mail clients to further refine the "visual media" group that responds positively to targeted advertisements with images."

Respectfully, the Examiner has misinterpreted the above paragraph. The above paragraph does not suggest tracking web site or web pages visited by the email recipient. What is meant by "tracking" the response of email clients in the above section is tracking or determining "the *file format* that an E-mail client can process and display,"⁵ not tracking web pages or user activity. Capiel is concerned with identifying *computer resources* executed on the *client computer*; the present invention is concerned with identifying the location of *web pages* visited by an *individual*.

⁴ In re Mills, 916 F.2d 680, 16 USPQ2d 1430 (Fed. Cir. 1990).

⁵ See col. 1, lns. 53-54 (emphasis added).

Based on the above distinctions, it is difficult to imagine how one skilled in the art would modify the invention of Capiel to track web surfing activities of an email recipient as claimed in the present application. However, even if we assume that Capiel's system is modifiable as suggested by the Examiner, there is no likelihood of success that the modification would cause Capiel's system to perform the tracking process in the same manner and create the same results as that claimed in the present application.

Since Capiel's system is designed to determine whether an "E-mail client software" executing on a client computer can display images in an HTML document, there is a requirement for a special server called the "E-mail sensor server 130" (in addition to the E-mail server 134 that forwards the emails). The function of the E-mail sensor server 130 is to receive a call from an E-mail client 148 in communication with the E-mail server 130.⁶ If the E-mail client software is HTML compatible, then a call to the E-mail sensor server provides the E-mail sensor server with the type and version of the E-mail client's software.⁷

Unlike the present invention, the client computer of Capiel does not forward a "unique identifier" that identifies the email recipient to a "server computer providing access to the one or more web sites . . . by way of sending the web site address to the server computer in a request submitted by the client computer to access said one or more web sites, independent from any consumer profile information previously stored on the client computer," as claimed. Instead, in the system of Capiel, the unique identifier is forwarded to the E-mail sensor server. "Thus, the E-mail sensor server 130 serves as a middleman information collection point between the vendor systems . . . and the E-mail clients".⁸ To the contrary, the present invention does not require "a middleman" server for collecting the identifying information.

⁶ See col. 3, lns. 35-42 and FIGS. 1-2.

⁷ See col. 5, lns. 9-16.

⁸ See col. 3, lns. 17-20.

As such, Capiel teaches away from the present invention by requiring a special server (i.e. E-mail sensor server) that is necessary to monitor information provided from the client. Without the Email sensor server, the invention of Capiel would not be able to track any information provided by the E-mail clients. Therefore, the tracking process in Capiel is performed using a method and system that is distinct from the method and process claimed by the Applicants.

Furthermore, the tracking process of Capiel can only track file format information and not web surfing activities. That is, in contrast to the Capiel's system, the present invention as claimed is for "establishing a connection between a client computer . . . and a server computer providing access to the one or more web sites . . . [and] providing the unique identifier to the server computer by way of sending the web site address to the server computer in a request submitted by the client computer to access said one or more web sites."

The E-mail sensor server of Capiel does not provide access to any web sites. The E-mail sensor server merely provides a special function which is to monitor calls from the E-mail client. The call is initiated in response to the Email client software reading an image tag, wherein the call includes information to identify the E-mail client's software. In contrast, the request submitted by the client computer of the present invention, as claimed, is submitted in response to the email recipient selecting a hyperlink included in an email, wherein the request includes a URL of the requested web site.

Since the Email sensor server cannot receive information about the web pages or web sites visited by the email recipient, it follows that it cannot function to track "the email recipient's movement within the one or more web sites by associating the unique identifier with information that defines consumer activity within said one or more web sites," as claimed. Therefore, since Capiel teaches away from the claimed tracking process of the present invention by requiring the utilization of a special E-mail sensor server,⁹ Capiel cannot be modified to include a process by

⁹ A careful review of the '634 patent indicates that the "E-mail sensor server" is the heart of the invention as disclosed by Capiel and that without this special E-mail sensor server the main inventive function (i.e., tracking the file format compatibility between a E-mail client and server) of the system of Capiel would not be possible.

which the web surfing activities of an email recipient may be monitored and recorded.

Finally, in spite of all the above, Capiel fails to disclose all the elements recited in claims 1, 22, 45, or 52 even in light of the suggested modifications. For example, there is no teaching or suggestion in Capiel for "embedding a unique identifier within a web site address . . . [for] uniquely identifying an email recipient" so that the web surfing activities of the email recipient can be tracked on the particular web site. As discussed above, and particularly referring to col. 7, lns. 34-63 of Capiel, the system of Capiel tracks file format compatibility by associating a unique identifier (i.e., "catid") with an "image tag." In contrast, in the present invention, as claimed, the tracking process is done by embedding a unique identifier in a "web site address".

Curiously, even though Capiel indirectly suggests "including the web site address in an electronic mail message sent to the email recipient, wherein the web site address provides the email recipient with access to one or more web sites" (i.e., "HTML hyperlinks"),¹⁰ Capiel does not disclose embedding a unique identifier in the web site address, as claimed by the Applicants, because Capiel's system is not equipped for tracking web pages. Capiel, instead, utilizes an image tag to track compatibility between a certain file format and the E-mail software running on a client computer. As such, Capiel further teaches away from the claimed invention by teaching a different tracking method to monitor a different matter than that claimed in the present invention, a testimonial to the well-established rule in patent law that obviousness may not be established by hindsight reconstruction or conjecture.¹¹

Further, Capiel fails to teach, suggest, or disclose:

"establishing a connection between a client computer used by the email recipient to receive the email and a server computer providing access to the one or more web sites, in response to the email recipient selecting a reference to the web site address included in the electronic mail message; providing the unique identifier to the server computer by way of sending the

¹⁰ See col. 7, lns. 30-33.

¹¹ ACS Hospital Systems, Inc. v. Montefiore Hospital, 221 U.S.P.Q. 929, 933 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

web site address to the server computer in a *request* submitted by the client computer *to access said one or more web sites*, independent from any consumer profile information previously stored on the client computer" (emphasis added).

In the cited reference, the E-mail client software establishes a connection with the "E-mail sensor server" not "a server computer providing access to the one or more web sites," as claimed. Additionally, in the cited reference, the connection is not established in response to the email recipient selecting a reference to a web site address. The connection established between the E-mail client and the E-mail sensor server allows the E-mail client to provide the unique identifier (i.e., "catid") to the E-mail sensor server computer, only if the E-mail client software recognizes the image tag included in the email forwarded to the user. The present invention, however, does not utilize an image tag for forwarding the unique identifier. Instead, the unique identifier is automatically forwarded "to the server computer by way of sending the web site address to the server computer in a request submitted by the client computer to access said one or more web sites."

As claimed in the present invention, the unique identifier is parsed by the "server computer" through which the target websites are accessible, as opposed to the "E-mail sensor server" disclosed in the cited prior art. It should be noted again that, unlike the claimed "server computer" of the present invention, Capiel's E-mail sensor server does not provide access to any websites or web pages. As such, the system of the present invention is resource efficient, as it does not require any additional overhead associated with maintaining a special "E-mail sensor server". Furthermore, the system of the present invention is patentably distinct from that of Capiel, in that it does not require the utilization of a special "E-mail sensor server" to track and identify compatibility between an E-mail client software and file formats included in an email.

As noted above, another point of distinction between the system of Capiel and the present invention is that in the present invention "the unique identifier [is provided to the server computer] . . . in response to the email recipient selecting a reference to the web site address included in the electronic mail message." In contrast, in the system of Capiel, the E-mail sensor server receives the unique identifier for a user only if the E-mail client software is HTML

enabled.¹² Otherwise, the "E-mail sensor server does not get an automatic response" that includes the unique identifier.¹³ All the above-noted distinctions point to the fact that the cited reference discloses a system and method that functions in a completely distinct manner in comparison with the claimed invention to achieve completely different results. The cited reference not only fails to teach and is not modifiable to perform the claimed process and system, it also teaches away from the present invention as claimed. The present invention, as claimed in claims 1-60, is patentably distinct from the cited reference.

Further, with respect to claims 3, 24, 52, 53, 56, 59, and claims depending therefrom, Capiel fails to teach, suggest, or disclose:

"identifying an IP address of the client computer, wherein the IP address is automatically logged in correspondence with the information that defines consumer activity"

or

"automatically storing access information about the one or more web pages visited by the email recipient in association with the IP address of the client computer in the log file of the server computer."

For the above reasons, the invention as claimed is distinguishable over the cited reference. As such, the entry of the amendments and the allowance of the claims as presented are respectfully requested.

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DRAWINGS

Redline copy of FIG. 7A adding the reference number 703 was provided to overcome the Draftsperson's objections under 37 CFR 1.84 or 1.152 and was submitted via United States Mail on June 25, 2002. Another redline copy is submitted per Examiner's request. Another request to

¹² See col. 5, lns. 5-16.

¹³ See col. 5, lns. 30-32.

amend the drawings, FIG. 7A, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(d) is submitted herewith. It is requested that submission and correction of further drawings to be held in abeyance until a Notice of Allowance is issued in this matter.

Please feel free to forward any questions and comments to the undersigned Attorney for Applicants or by calling 310-789-2100.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope address to: Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, or via facsimile to (703) 746 7239 on the date shown below.


Attorney for Applicant(s)

January ²⁷, 2003
Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,



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ATTACHMENT A

CLAIMS

1. A method for electronically identifying a consumer without requiring consumer registration, the method comprising:

embedding a unique identifier within a web site address, the unique identifier uniquely identifying an email recipient;

including the web site address in an electronic mail message sent to the email recipient, wherein the web site address provides the email recipient with access to one or more web sites;

establishing a connection between a client computer used by the email recipient to receive the email and a server computer providing access to the one or more web sites, in response to the email recipient selecting a reference to the web site address included in the electronic mail message;

providing the unique identifier to the server computer by way of sending the web site address to the server computer in a request submitted by the client computer to access said one or more web sites, independent from any consumer profile information previously stored on the client computer;

parsing the web site address in the request, to retrieve the unique identifier embedded in the web site address;

identifying the email recipient based on the retrieved unique identifier; and

tracking the email recipient's movement within the one or more web sites by associating the unique identifier with information that defines consumer activity within said one or more web sites.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the act of tracking the email recipient's movement within said one or more web sites comprises:

storing in at least one log file the unique identifier in association with the information that defines consumer activity; and

extracting the information that defines consumer activity based on said association to

track consumer movement.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the act of associating the unique identifier with information that defines consumer activity comprises:

identifying an IP address of the client computer, wherein the IP address is automatically logged in correspondence with the information that defines consumer activity; and

associating the unique identifier with the IP address such that the information that defines consumer activity can be extracted based on the association between the IP address and the unique identifier.

4. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the act of associating the unique identifier with information that defines consumer activity comprises:

identifying connection [or environment] specific information related to the established connection between the client computer and the one or more web sites, wherein the connection specific information is automatically logged in correspondence with the information that defines consumer activity; and

associating the unique identifier with of the connection specific information such that information that defines consumer activity can be extracted based on the association between of the connection specific information and the unique identifier.

5. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the unique identifier identifies a consumer's electronic mail address.

6. (Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the one or more web sites include a plurality of links to other web pages [that can be] located at a plurality of web servers.

7. (Amended) The method according to Claim 6, wherein the plurality of links to other web pages includes a link to a web page from where the consumer [can purchase]

purchases merchandise.

8. (Amended) The method according to Claim 6, wherein the plurality of links to other web pages includes a link to a web page from where the consumer [can] electronically [view] views images of merchandise.

9. (Amended) The method according to Claim 6, wherein the plurality of links to other web pages includes a link to a web page from where the consumer [may] electronically [contact] contacts a seller.

10. The method according to Claim 1, wherein information about the consumer's movement within the one or more web sites is stored in a log file.

11. The method according to Claim 10, wherein the log file includes the addresses of the one or more web sites.

12. The method of Claim 10, wherein the log file includes information regarding number of times the consumer accesses a particular web site.

13. The method of Claim 10, wherein the log file includes information regarding any purchase the consumer makes while visiting the one or more web site.

14. The method according to Claim 10, wherein the log file includes duration of the consumer's visit to a particular web site.

15. The method according to Claim 10, further comprising:
developing a consumer master database based upon the log file;

querying the master database; and
determining consumer preferences.

16. The method according to Claim 15, wherein the master database includes a plurality of segments including an email look up segment that includes a listing of a plurality of consumer electronic mail addresses with corresponding unique identifiers.

17. The method according to Claim 15, wherein the master database includes a consumer information segment that contains consumer related information.

18. The method according to Claim 15, wherein the master database includes a promotional material segment that includes information regarding promotional materials.

19. The method according to Claim 15, wherein the master database includes a purchasing segment that includes information regarding purchases made by the consumers.

20. The method according to Claim 15, wherein the master database includes a URL segment that includes a plurality of URLs with corresponding keywords and plurality of keycodes associated with the keywords.

21. The method according to Claim 15, wherein the master database includes a credit card segment that includes consumer credit card number, date and amount of purchase by consumer.

22. Computer executable process stored in a computer readable medium for identifying a consumer without requiring consumer registration, the process comprising:
embedding a unique identifier within a web site address, the unique identifier uniquely

identifying a consumer;

establishing a connection between the consumer's computer and a server computer providing access to one or more web sites, in response to a consumer selecting a reference to the web site address forwarded by way of electronic mail;

providing the unique identifier to the server computer by way of sending the website address to the server computer to access the one or more web sites, independent from any consumer profile information previously stored on the client computer;

parsing the web site address to retrieve the unique identifier embedded in the web site address; and

tracking the consumer's movement within the one or more web sites by associating the unique identifier with information that defines consumer activity within said one or more web sites.

23. The computer executable process of Claim 22, wherein the act of tracking consumer movement within said one or more web sites comprises:

storing in a log file the unique identifier in association with the information that defines consumer activity within said one or more web sites;

searching the log file for the unique identifier; and

extracting the information that defines consumer activity based on its association with the unique identifier to track consumer movement.

24. The computer executable process of Claim 22, wherein the act of associating the unique identifier with information that defines consumer activity comprises:

identifying an IP address used for establishing the connection between the consumer's computer and the one or more web sites, wherein the IP address is automatically logged in correspondence with the information that defines consumer activity; and

associating the unique identifier with the IP address such that the information that defines consumer activity can be extracted based on the association between the IP address and the

unique identifier.

25. The computer executable process of Claim 22, wherein the act of associating the unique identifier with information that define consumer activity comprises:

identifying connection specific information related to the established connection between the consumer's computer and the one or more web sites, wherein the connection specific information is automatically logged in correspondence with the information that defines consumer activity; and

associating the unique identifier with the connection specific information such that data that defines consumer activity can be extracted based on the association between the IP address and the unique identifier.

26. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 22, wherein the unique identifier identifies a consumer's electronic mail address.

27. (Amended) Computer executable process steps according to Claim 22, wherein the one or more web sites include a plurality of links to other web pages [that can be] located at a plurality of web servers.

28. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 27, wherein the plurality of links to other web pages located at a plurality of web servers includes a link to a web page from where the consumer can purchase merchandise.

29. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 27, wherein the plurality of links to other web pages includes a link to a web page from where the consumer can electronically view images of merchandise.

30. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 27, wherein the plurality of

links to other web pages includes a link to a web page from where the consumer may electronically contact a seller.

31. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 22, wherein information about the consumer's movement within the one or more web sites is stored in a log file.

32. Computer executable process steps according to Claim according to 31, wherein the log file includes the addresses of the one or more web sites.

33. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 31, wherein the log file includes information regarding number of times the consumer accesses a particular web site.

34. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 31, wherein the log file includes information regarding any purchase the consumer makes while visiting the one or more web site.

35. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 31, wherein the log file includes the duration of the consumer's visit to a particular web site.

36. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 31, further comprising:
developing a consumer master database based upon the log file;
querying the master database; and
determining consumer preferences.

37. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 36, wherein the master database includes a plurality of segments including an email look up segment that includes a listing of a plurality of consumer electronic mail addresses with corresponding unique identifiers.

38. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 36, wherein the master database includes a consumer information segment that contains consumer related information.

39. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 36, wherein the master database includes a promotional material segment that includes information regarding promotional materials.

40. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 36, wherein the master database includes a purchasing segment that includes information regarding purchases made by the consumers.

41. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 36, wherein the master database includes a URL segment for storing plurality of keywords associated with plurality of URLs, and the plurality of key codes associated with plurality of keywords.

42. Computer executable process steps according to Claim 36, wherein the master database includes a credit card segment that includes consumer credit card number, date and amount of purchase by consumer.

43. The method of Claim 1, wherein the unique identifier is a consumer's credit card information.

44. The computer executable process of Claim 22, wherein the unique identifier is a consumer's credit card information.

45. A method for electronically identifying a consumer without requiring consumer registration, the method comprising:

receiving a consumer request to access one or more web sites implemented on at least one server computer, wherein the consumer request is submitted by way of a client computer and the request includes a web site address, sent to the consumer in an electronic mail message, with a unique identifier embedded in the web site address for uniquely identifying the particular consumer;

parsing the web site address to find the unique identifier; and

logging the unique identifier in one or more log files in association with information that defines consumer activity within said one or more web sites, independent from any consumer profile information previously stored on the client computer by any servers.

46. The method of Claim 45, further comprising:

extracting the information that defines consumer activity based on its association with the unique identifier to track consumer movement.

47. (Amended) The method of Claim 45, wherein the consumer request is received through a connection established between the consumer's computer and the one or more web sites, the method further comprising:

identifying at least one of connection [or] and environment specific information related to the established connection between the consumer's computer and the one or more web sites, wherein at least one of the connection and environment specific information is automatically logged in correspondence with the information that defines consumer activity; and

associating the unique identifier with at least one of the connection [or] and environment specific information such that information that defines consumer activity can be extracted based on the association between at least one of the connection [or] and environment specific information and the unique identifier.

48. (Amended) The method of Claim 47, wherein at least one of the connection [or] and environment specific information relates to IP address of the consumer's computer.

49. The method of Claim 47, wherein the unique identifier relates to credit card information of the consumer.

50. The method of Claim 47, wherein the unique identifier relates to electronic mail address of the consumer.

51. (Amended) The method of Claim 47, wherein at least one of the connection [or] and environment specific information relates to an operating system executing on the consumer's computer.

52. (Amended) A unique identifier embedded in a URL provided to a consumer by way electronic mail, such that when the consumer selects the URL a connection is established between a consumer computer having a first IP address and a web server providing access to one or more web sites, wherein the web server receives the URL via said established connection independent from any consumer profile information previously stored on the client computer, wherein the web server parses the URL for the unique identifier, and wherein the IP address is recorded in a log file in association with the unique identifier.

53. (New) A computer-implemented method for electronically tracking web pages visited by an email recipient without requiring advanced registration, the method comprising:

embedding a unique identifier within a uniform resource locator (URL), the unique identifier uniquely identifying an email recipient, the URL identifying one or more web pages;

including the URL in form of a link in an email sent to the email recipient, wherein selecting the link provides the email recipient with access to the one or more web pages;

establishing a connection between a server computer and a client computer used by the email recipient to receive the email, in response to the email recipient selecting the link, wherein the server computer provides access to the one or more web pages identified by the URL;

providing the unique identifier to the server computer by way of a request submitted by the client computer to access said one or more web pages, independent from any profile

information previously stored on the client computer, wherein the request includes the URL in which the unique identifier is embedded;

parsing the URL in the request to retrieve the unique identifier embedded in the URL;

identifying the email recipient based on the retrieved unique identifier;

automatically storing the unique identifier in association with the IP address of the client computer in a log file of the server computer; and

automatically storing access information about the one or more web pages visited by the email recipient in association with the IP address of the client computer in the log file of the server computer.

54. (New) The computer-implemented method of Claim 53, further comprising:

extracting the access information for a particular email recipient by cross-referencing the IP address of the client computer used by the particular email recipient with respective access information and unique identifier stored in the log file in association with the IP address.

55. (New) The computer-implemented method of Claim 53, wherein the access information comprises at least one of: an address of a web page visited by the email recipient, duration of the visit, and purchase information during of the visit.

56. (New) A computer system for electronically tracking web pages visited by an email recipient without requiring advanced registration, the system comprising:

means for embedding a unique identifier within a uniform resource locator (URL), the unique identifier uniquely identifying an email recipient, the URL identifying one or more web pages;

means for including the URL in form of a link in an email sent to the email recipient, wherein selecting the link provides the email recipient with access to the one or more web pages;

means for establishing a connection between a server computer and a client computer used by the email recipient to receive the email, in response to the email recipient selecting the

link, wherein the server computer provides access to the one or more web pages identified by the URL;

means for providing the unique identifier to the server computer by way of a request submitted by the client computer to access said one or more web pages, independent from any profile information previously stored on the client computer, wherein the request includes the URL in which the unique identifier is embedded;

means for parsing the URL in the request to retrieve the unique identifier embedded in the URL;

means for identifying the email recipient based on the retrieved unique identifier;

means for automatically storing the unique identifier in association with the IP address of the client computer in a log file of the server computer; and

means for automatically storing access information about the one or more web pages visited by the email recipient in association with the IP address of the client computer in the log file of the server computer.

57. (New) The computer system of Claim 56, further comprising:

means for extracting the access information for a particular email recipient by cross-referencing the IP address of the client computer used by the particular email recipient with respective access information and unique identifier stored in the log file in association with the IP address.

58. (New) The computer system of Claim 56, wherein the access information comprises at least one of: an address of a web page visited by the email recipient, duration of the visit, and purchase information during of the visit.

59. (New) A computer-readable medium comprising a computer-executable process stored for electronically tracking web pages visited by an email recipient without requiring advanced registration, the computer-executable process comprising:

embedding a unique identifier within a uniform resource locator (URL), the unique identifier uniquely identifying an email recipient, the URL identifying one or more web pages;

including the URL in form of a link in an email sent to the email recipient, wherein selecting the link provides the email recipient with access to the one or more web pages;

establishing a connection between a server computer and a client computer used by the email recipient to receive the email, in response to the email recipient selecting the link, wherein the server computer provides access to the one or more web pages identified by the URL;

providing the unique identifier to the server computer by way of a request submitted by the client computer to access said one or more web pages, independent from any profile information previously stored on the client computer, wherein the request includes the URL in which the unique identifier is embedded;

parsing the URL in the request to retrieve the unique identifier embedded in the URL;

identifying the email recipient based on the retrieved unique identifier;

automatically storing the unique identifier in association with the IP address of the client computer in a log file of the server computer; and

automatically storing access information about the one or more web pages visited by the email recipient in association with the IP address of the client computer in the log file of the server computer.

60. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 59, wherein the computer-executable process further comprises:

extracting the access information for a particular email recipient by cross-referencing the IP address of the client computer used by the particular email recipient with respective access information and unique identifier stored in the log file in association with the IP address,

wherein the access information comprises at least one of: an address of a web page visited by the email recipient, duration of the visit, and purchase information during of the visit.